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18 September 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

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Deputy Chief
Product Review Division
Intelligence Community Staff

SUBJECT : Informal Comments on ICS Studies on Signal
Intelligence Production During an Inter-
national Crisis and Photographic Intelligence
Production During an International Crisis

1. Thank you for the opportunity to comment once again on these draft studies, which reflect the results of extensive efforts to pinpoint means by which the Intelligence Community's performance during times of crisis could be improved.

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We expect that a number of points contained in the studies may well lead to a lively discussion around the USIB table, where parochial interests sometimes have a tendency to appear paramount. The following paragraphs highlight several areas (noted in our comments on earlier drafts) which, perforce, may surface again at USIB.

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2. A theme common to both papers is the recommendation that an NSA and an NPIC liaison officer serve TDY with "whatever de facto crisis task force is established under the DCI's auspices." In our view, this is an improvement of the earlier versions which called for automatically assigning a liaison officer to the DCI to assist the NIO involved, but we believe neither is really required. In the case of NSA, points of contact for the NIOs have already been established while in the photographic field, similar arrangements could also be arranged with NPIC. The addition of two personnel during a time of crisis, we believe, would complicate rather than simplify recently instituted, extant systems. NSA and DDS&T may raise these points at USIB.

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3. In our view, the greatest utility of a liaison officer from NSA and NPIC would be in his location at his parent agency where he would be available to respond to queries or requests for action from either a crisis task force or the NIO involved. This system has worked extremely well, thus far, with the NSA assigned contact points for the NIOs. In numerous cases, the NSA contact's substantive and organizational knowledge has enabled him to check out a problem with all the appropriate components of NSA and to respond very quickly in a manner which would not have been possible had the contact been away from Fort Meade. A similar arrangement with NPIC and/or COMIREX should lead to equal responsiveness in the photographic field.

4. In the field of SIGINT specifically, production elements may raise objections to the thrust for expanded interpretive (vice analytical in earlier versions) reporting by NSA -- particularly during a crisis when SIGINT volume increases. This would appear to be the time for all hands to turn to and move the traffic, adding appropriate comments but without making "extensive interpretation" which is so time-consuming. The valid point in the study that NSA analysts have valuable expertise to offer can be, in our judgment, best capitalized on by brief NSA comments as opposed to detailed interpretive (read analytical) efforts on their part which would impinge on their time to process and summarize the take during the crisis.

5. The proposal that NSA should cease dissemination of field reporting to the production agencies when the volume of SIGINT becomes excessive during a crisis strikes us as another area in which there will be considerable USIB discussion. Virtually all production analysts prefer to receive the basic reporting -- not summarized versions -- on which they will make their own judgments. A reduction of direct field reporting based on specific priority guidance would be much more palatable to the production agencies than its elimination and replacement with NSA prepraed summaries alone. The recommendation that all-source analysts be better trained in SIGINT matters should help alleviate the SIGINT "bottom of the in-box" syndrome.



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